

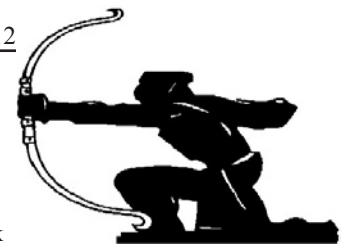


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A Hair-Raising Encounter at the Barber's

By Samuel Grove
My first assignment for *THE ARCHER* was indeed a strange one. Having gone to Gus's hairdresser for nearly twenty years I had no idea that for the last six of them he had been storing a 5 ft lizard called Arnie at the back of the premises.

The circumstances of the lizard's arrival were even more peculiar. Originally from South America, he came into Gus's hands when he precipitated the breakdown of the previous owner's marriage. Harsh? I thought so, until I saw the beast.

Offering something a little different for the weekend... Arnie the iguana.
Photo by Erini Rodis.

Gus assured me it was an Iguana – however I'm not convinced there hadn't been a horrible mix up and it is actually an adolescent crocodile. I stood there nervously, wondering whether it could smash through the glass and put me in a death roll right in the middle of the barbers. What was it that David Attenborough has said you should do? I think it was grab the eyeball.

"What does it eat?" I inquired, "Spiders? Rodents? Baby caribou?"

The answer is Arnie is a vegetarian with a particular liking for lettuce. Having been rather fearful of the answer

I was somewhat disappointed by its lack of a killer instinct. Was Gus ever tempted to starve him for a couple of days and then put in a lame dormouse? Apparently not. Gus, unfortunately, is a very responsible owner. Apart from a slight illness a couple of years ago (that cost Gus a fortune at the vet's) Arnie has been in very good health. As I take a closer look he even looks quite cute. "When he's in the mood he likes to be stroked," I was informed.

If there are any other peculiar creatures around East Finchley *THE ARCHER* would like to hear about them.

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